



SANDY WRITING

Materials you need:

- A shallow tray – you might want to set up a few if you have a large group or mainly toddlers.
- Alfoil or metallic paper or rainbow coloured paper (or whatever you have!)
- 2 cups of sand
- A basket of interesting materials to use in the sand tray to make patterns. Try twigs, spoons, balls and other funny shaped objects from the kitchen drawer!

Setup for play:

- Line the trays with the foil or paper.
- Add the sand and basket of objects and let the children use their hands to explore the sand tray, make patterns and reveal the paper underneath the sand.
- As they play encourage them (if they want to) to try using different objects to write in the sand with. This is also helpful if you have a child who doesn't like to touch sand with their hands so make sure to include some objects with a longer handle to hold.
- When you draw your own patterns in the sand tray try to use and model left to right movements as this helps children get ready for reading and writing.

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children create patterns and marks in the sand tray they are learning to:

- Classify and group items together by patterns
- Use their senses to explore and create
- Use hand/eye coordination skills and concentration
- Manipulate small objects using pincer movements
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Manipulate equipment and real life tools with increasing competence
- Recognise symbols and how things can represent other things
- Express themselves creatively
- Identify and describe different patterns

Extending the play:

- Add some water spray bottles and see what patterns they can make in the sand tray now. How does water change the texture? Does it make it harder or easier to make marks?
- Use ice cubes in the sand tray to make trails and patterns.

